

CSOTTE Fall Teacher Education Conference
San Marcos, October 2021

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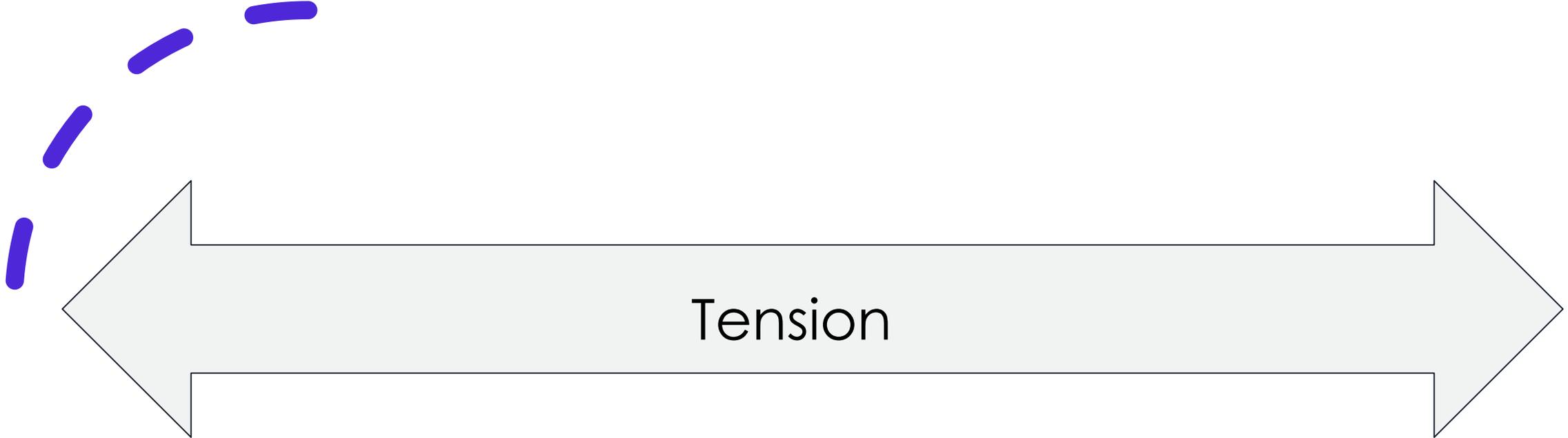
Relationships Matter

Novice Teachers Balancing *Tensions*
on the “Edge of Chaos”

and

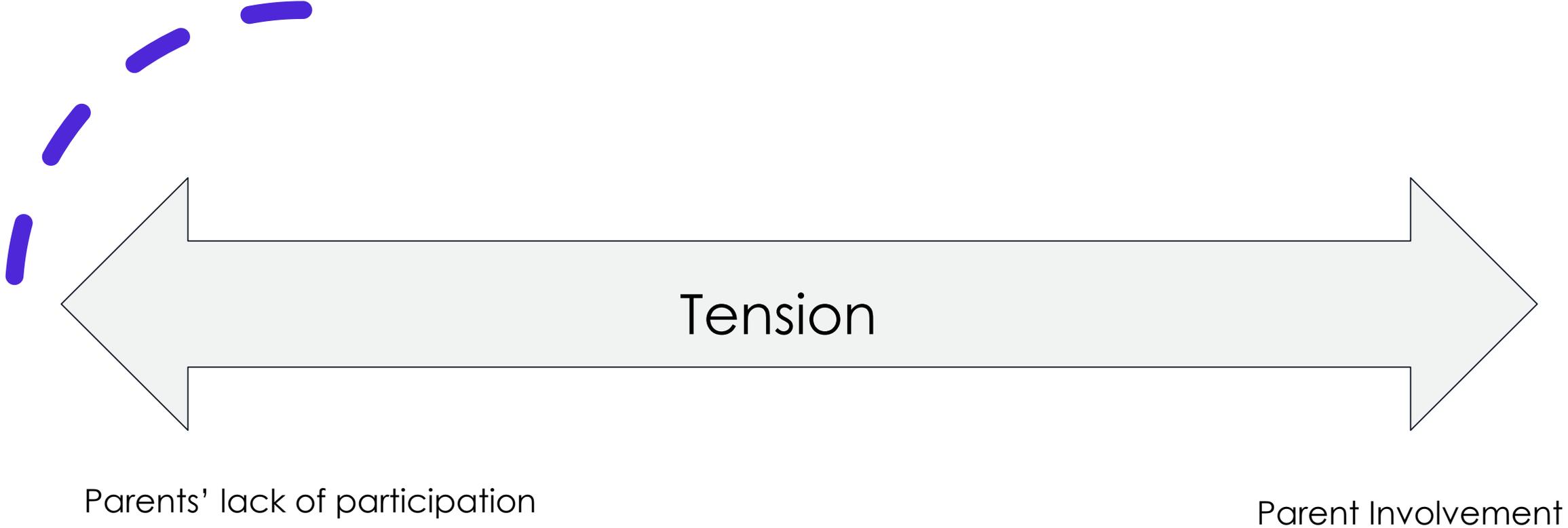
Forging SEL Partnerships in
Online/Blended Learning
Environments

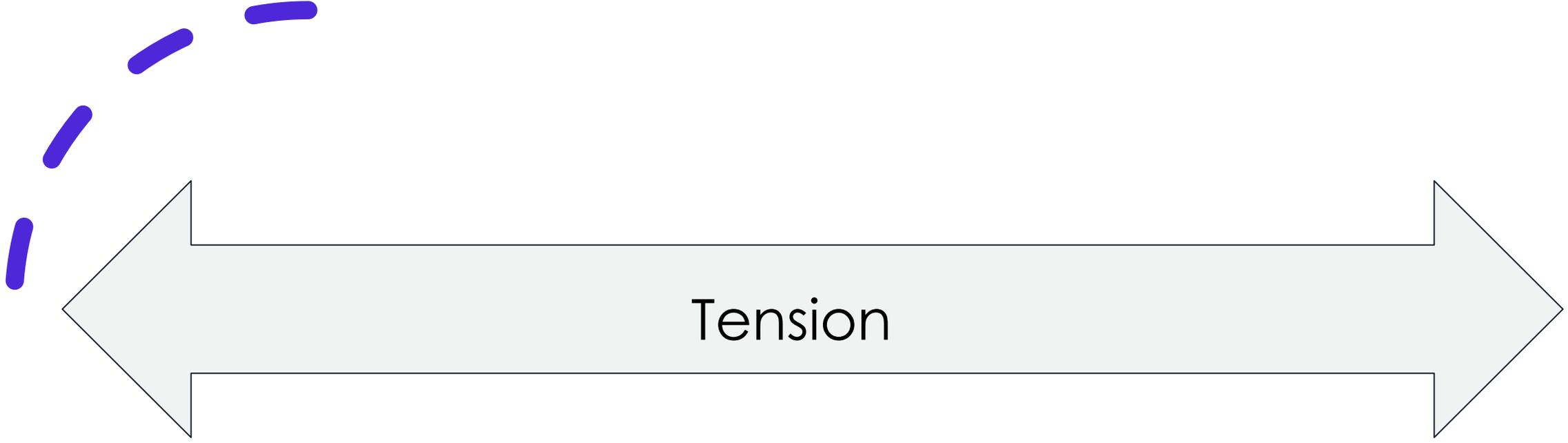




Your challenge

Your desired outcome



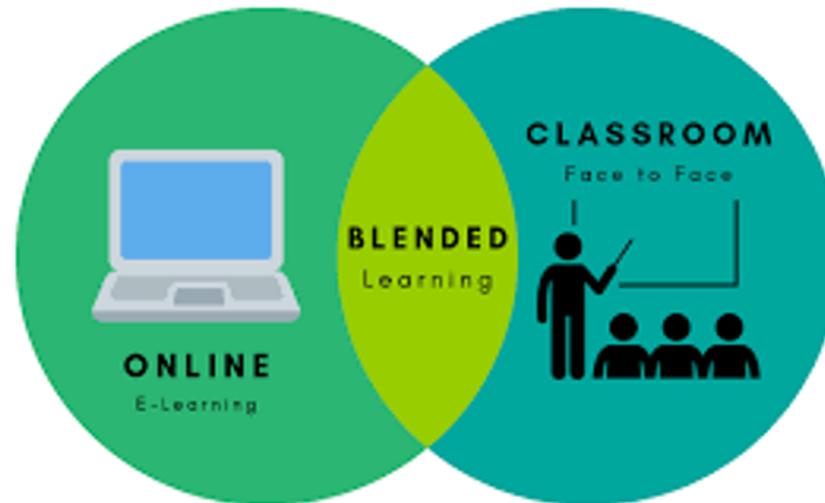


Lack of preparation information

Being prepared

Context

- 2019-2020 academic year
- Face-to-face and online
- Northeast Texas schools
- Novice teachers with incomplete teacher prep



Research Question

How did first-year teachers navigate the challenges of teaching during a pandemic when their own EPP experience had been compromised due to pandemic-related school closures?

First Year Teachers



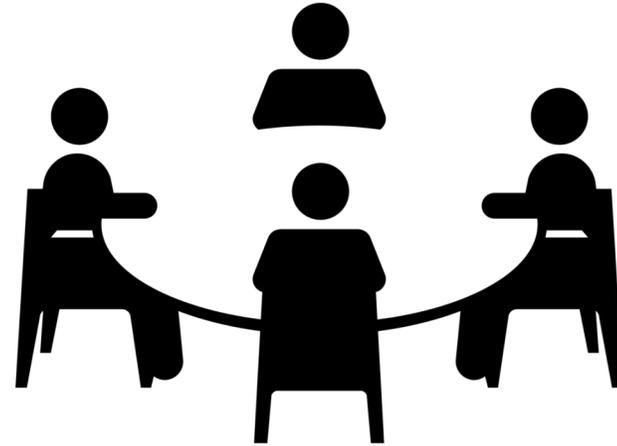
First Year Teachers

Age	18-24 years old (3)
Gender	Female (3)
Ethnicity/Race	White (2); Latina (1)
Grades	Grades 1, 3, 10-11

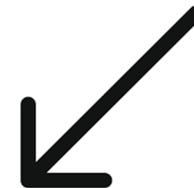
First Year Teacher Data



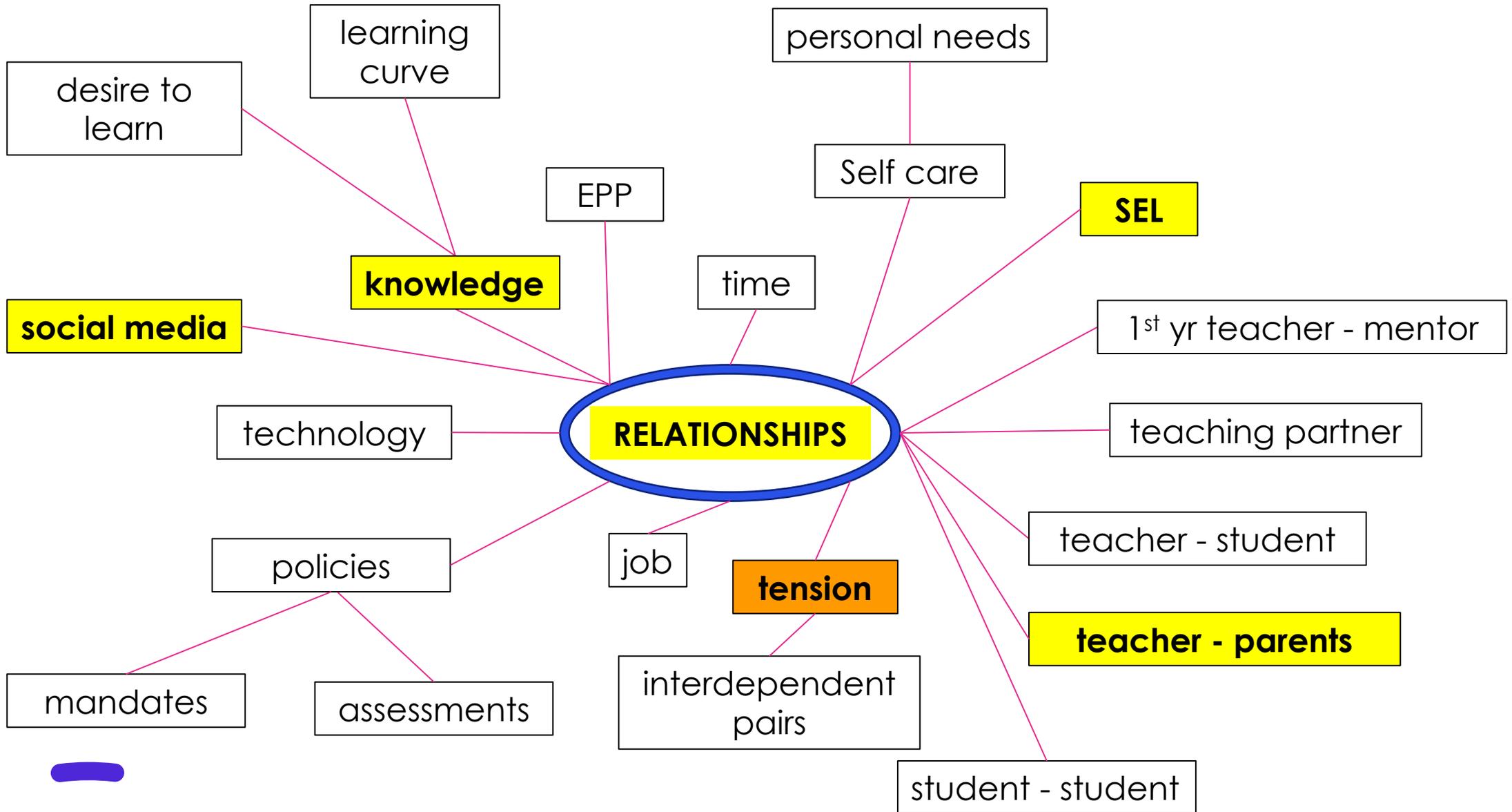
3 Interviews



2 Focus Groups



Content Analysis



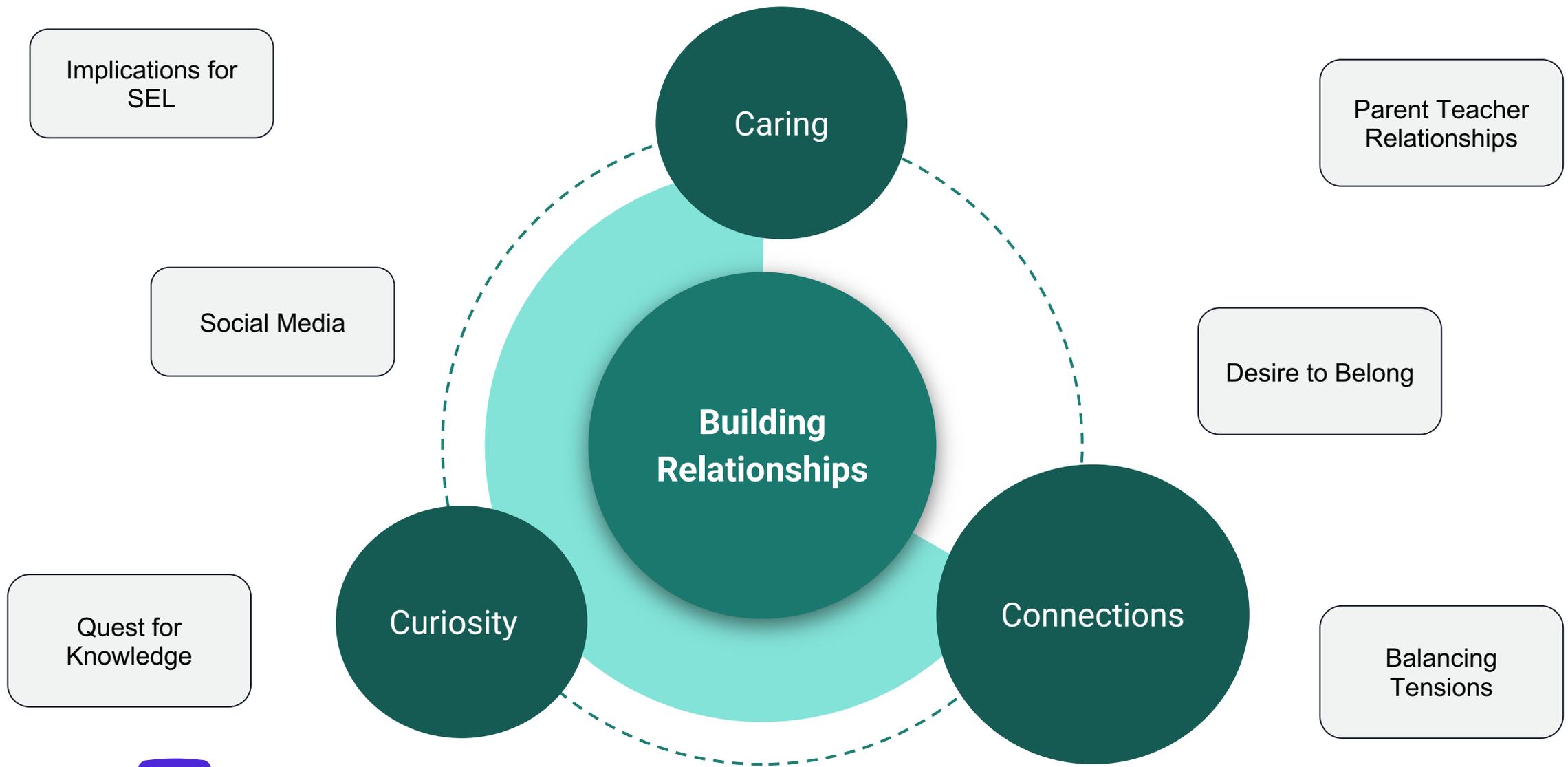
Types of Relationships found in the Data (pattern analysis)

Findings

Relationships matter when navigating the complexities of becoming a teacher in turbulent times.

Three themes:

1. Novice teachers' use of social media as a support for teaching, knowledge-building, and belonging
2. Impact of parent-teacher partnerships on students' SEL opportunities, and challenges of forming relationships with families and caregivers.
3. Caring, curiosity, and connections facilitated the capacity for balancing *tensions/interdependent pairs* (Patterson & Holladay, 2018) in the system of teaching.



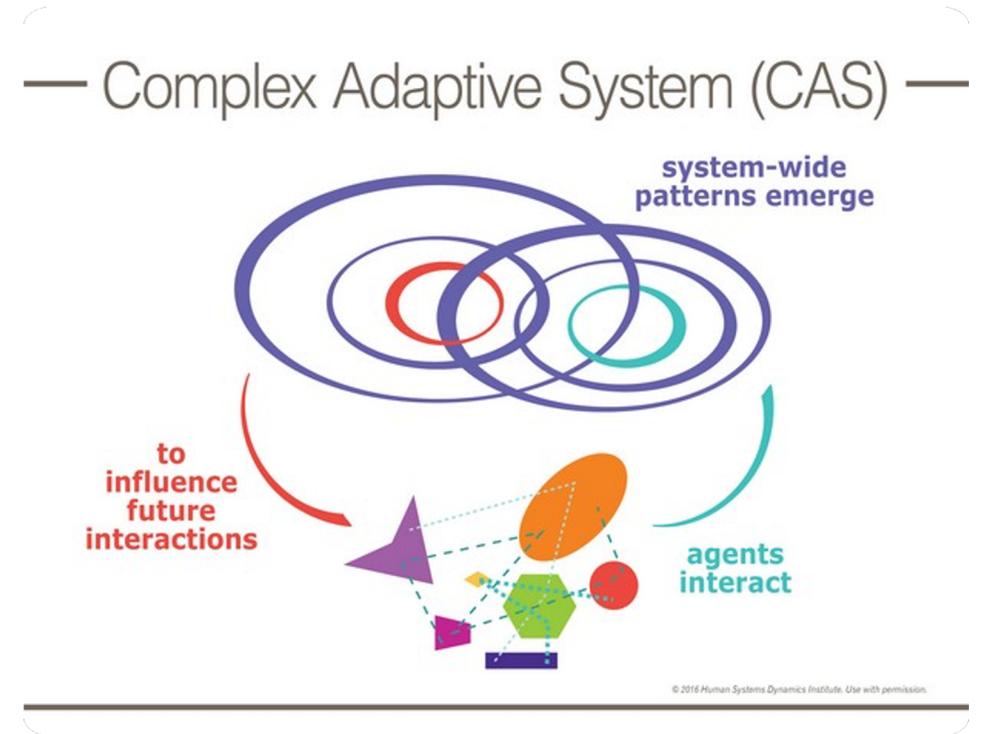
Caring, curiosity, and connections facilitated the capacity for balancing *tensions* (Patterson & Holladay, 2018) in the system of teaching during a pandemic.

Complexity and Adaptation in Systems

Complexity thinking is emerging in education as “an attitude toward studying particular sorts of phenomena” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 4).

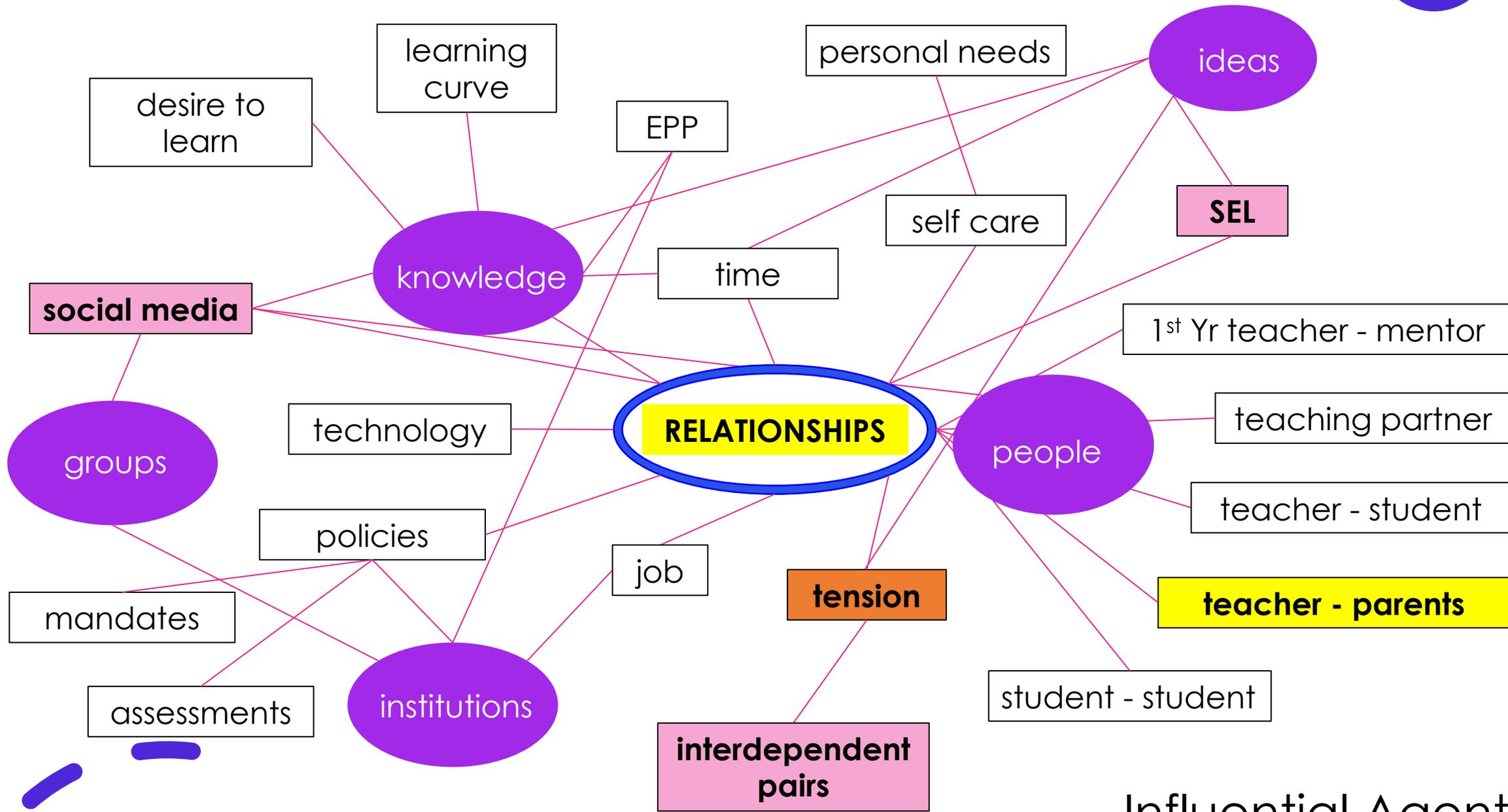
- Uncertainty
- Interconnectedness
- Emergence
- Co-evolution across agents in a system

Cilliers, 1998; Joseph, 2020; Pycroft, 2014



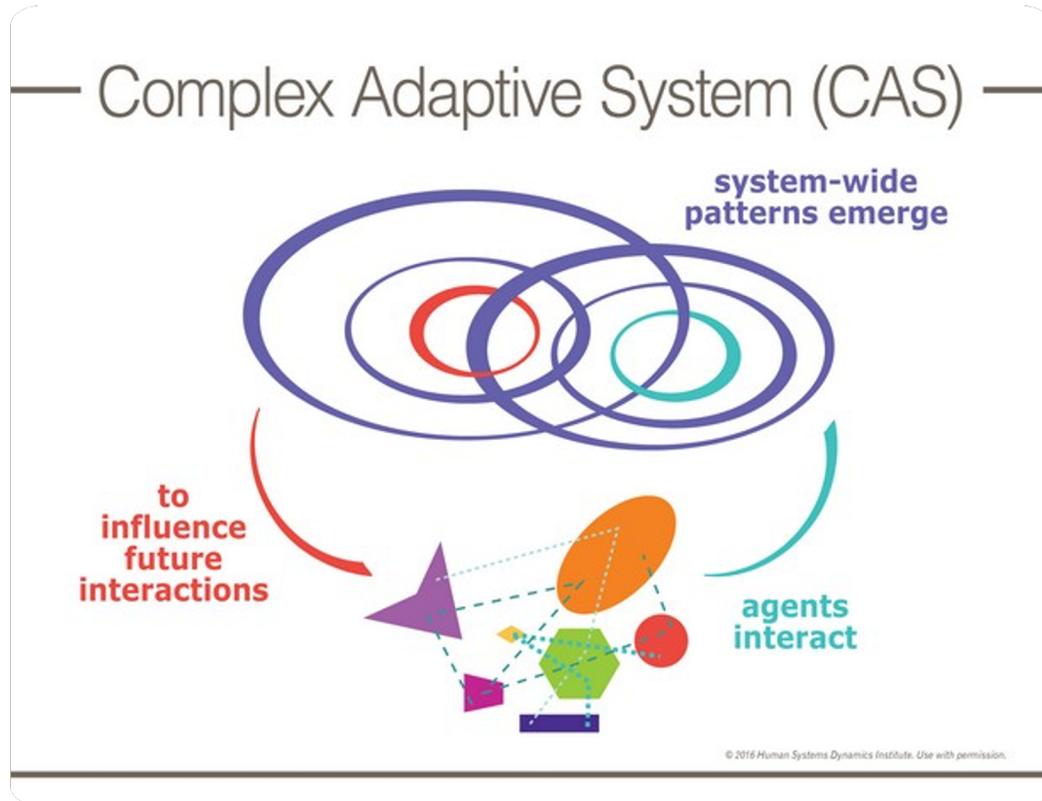
Human Systems Dynamics, 2021; Patterson & Holladay, 2018

Agents = people, ideas, events



Influential Agents

Systems Seek Coherence by Balancing Tensions



- Tensions in complex systems are interdependent pairs across a spectrum.
- Neither good/bad; nor either/or
- Allow new patterns to emerge



In a complex adaptive system, however, dialectical relationships are interdependent and scalable across a system in which the agents in the system seek coherence by attempting to balance the tension created by these extreme relationships (Patterson & Holladay, 2018).

Tension: Parent Relationships in Theory

"I've always been the type that, **we're a team for your child**. It's not me against you or you against them. It's not me against them. We are a team for your child's success because if we're not, then there's no way that we're going to make them successful."

-Third grade teacher

"First graders can't log on a computer by themselves. They can't sit there and read the instructions, the thorough instructions that they need. They can't get everything that they possibly can by themselves. **It has to be a parent reading directions, walking them through, it has to be parent child right next to each other all day until that work is done because the kid can't do it.**"

--First grade teacher



Parent as Caregiver

Parent as
Teacher

Parent Relationships in Practice

“When you're 16, 17-- A lot of those students are online because they have jobs or because they feel like it and like **their parents don't care, I guess.**”



Parent as deficit

Parent as Asset

“I have one parent, like I said, I can't get ahold of to do anything. I sent a retention letter, and all of a sudden **she wants to blow my email up.** And I'm like, I've tried. I have a parent log four pages long of me reaching out to her telling all the assignments that her child hasn't done, and now all of a sudden, now that it's now affecting your child's grade, **he's now going to be held back, now it's important to you.** And so like X said, I think it's just a matter of the parents... **If the parent wants to have a relationship with you, they'll make it happen.**”

Parent Relationships in Practice

“But then I have one kid who was [online] there for quite a while, too, and **his mom and dad would make up all the excuses under the sun**. And it's like, like X said, I feel bad, I **feel like I'm having to babysit a parent**. I've had them sit there, remind them, "Hey, you have to do attendance. And you have to send me pictures of the kids work every day or he can't be counted present." **I have to sit there and say that all the time, even though she knows it**. And then that kid, he missed like, oh gosh, like 29 days out of 39 days, I think, in a semester, like in a nine weeks or whatever. **And it's just because they're [the parents] not doing the work and they don't want to do the work, or the kids are having a hard time doing it at home so the parents just give up and don't want to do it**. So then they lose all that time. And it hurts the kid, not the parents.”



Teacher's Expectations

Parent's Reality

Gaps in Knowledge

“I wish that I would've gotten to see more of how my mentor communicated with parents because even... it sounds funny, but when you're calling a parent, it's like, "What do I say? How do I introduce myself?" And I think one good thing they taught us during our student teaching is you should always start with something positive. You should always call and introduce yourself, say, "Hey, I've really enjoyed having so-and-so in my class." So I think that's one good thing I took away from that. But I think even just learning how to maybe... it's not a script, but almost kind of just what's appropriate. What's an appropriate way to start a phone call or an email, something like that. That first time you contact a parent.”

“This week we started parent teacher conferences. As the first year teacher, I'm like, 'This is going to go crazy. I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do.'”



EPP Curriculum

On the Job
Training

Social Media to Fill Gaps in Knowledge

“Everything that they talk about, I **can find out online.**”

“I know **we covered it briefly** (running record) in the preparation program, but it's just... **I'll watch a YouTube video** on how to take a running record and understand, and try to understand, what all information I need and try and just... I try it out on one kid and see if it works.”

“You can **ask a question** and post it and then you can **get responses** from all over. And they're always very helpful.”



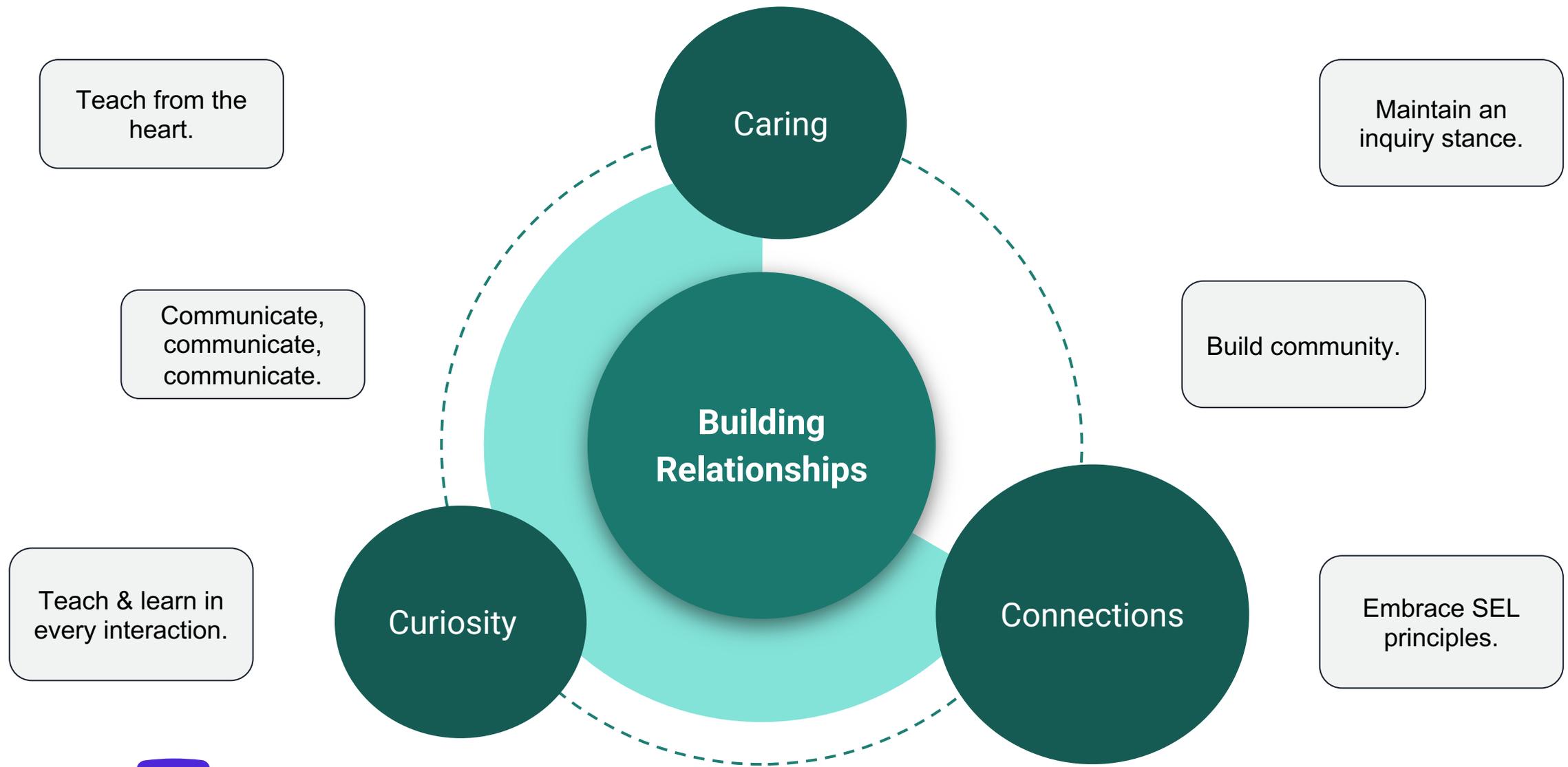
What they
need to know

What they
know

Interdependent Pairs (*tensions*)

- Parents and teachers are partners in teaching; **co-dependent when teaching online.**
- Feedback between agents is essential for success: **social media, mentors, peers, students.**
- Systems learn and evolve from the bottom up: **social media supports curiosity & filling the knowledge gap, provides community & self-care.**
- New trends emerge on the *edge of chaos* (Waldrop, 1992) through **curiosity & caring.**

Adaptation = Sustainability



Simple Rules Emerge

Implications for Education Preparation Programs

Attitudinal shift among teacher educators:

- Strengthen teacher-parent education & SEL.
 - different models for embracing parental involvement
 - role of community liaison
- Embrace social media as an instructional tool.
- Prepare teacher to take an inquiry stance.



CASEL's SEL Framework (2020)

Inquiry Stance

People who consciously and thoughtfully engage in praxis take a stance that includes both curiosity and humility.

HSD, 2021; Patterson & Holladay, 2018, p. 58

Inquiry

- turn judgement into curiosity
- turn disagreement into shared exploration
- turn defensiveness into self-reflection
- turn assumptions into questions

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